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## **MEDIA ADVISORY:**

### **CMS issues updated nursing home visitation guidance**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued revised nursing home visitation guidance today, March 10, that now also includes consideration of the impact of COVID-19 vaccination.

The guidance, [QSO-20-39-NH](#), includes the following changes:

- All visitors who enter the facility will need to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of the visitor's vaccination status.
- Facilities can allow indoor visitations for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), **except for a few circumstances when visitation should still be limited** due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission, such as:
  - For unvaccinated residents if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is greater than 10% and fewer than 70% of residents have been vaccinated.
  - For residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the CMS criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions.
  - For residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.
- Procedures for handling visitations during an outbreak situation, and how to determine if such visits can occur depending on how far the outbreak has spread in the facility.
- Encouraging, but not requiring, visitors to become vaccinated.

"We are still reviewing today's guidance, but it appears that it does what we have called for and longed for: an orderly reopening of nursing homes in Iowa and across the nation," said Brent Willett, Iowa Health Care Association President and CEO. "It is almost exactly one year to the day since nursing homes were closed to visitors nationwide and 357 days since the first COVID-19 case was reported in an Iowa nursing home. Today's action by CMS is historic: thousands of Iowa families will soon be able to visit their loved ones once again."

To read the CMS guidance in its entirety, visit: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

#### **About the Iowa Health Care Association**

The Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA), along with its affiliates the Iowa Center for Assisted Living (ICAL) and Iowa Center for Home Care (IHC), is an integrated statewide association serving organizations that provide post-acute health care to improve the lives of Iowans, including nursing facilities, assisted living, residential care, senior living communities and home health agencies.

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